



Faith

Getting Started

- *Larger LIFEGroups may consider splitting into same gender groups in order to facilitate more meaningful discussion.*
- *Groups will not have enough time to discuss every question. Leaders are encouraged to skip questions and make substitutions based on what's best for their group.*

Warm Ups (15 Min)

- Everyone go around and share a “High” from the week and a “Low” from the week.
- What is something you learned while growing up, either positive or negative, about marriage from your family?

Community Note (1 Min)

- In the midst of a marriage series, some people might ask: “Why should singles care?”
 - a. Studies show that the vast majority of people eventually get married - and a series like this can help prepare people for a future relationship.
 - b. Our health as the body of Christ depends on all people pouring into one another - and leaning into a study on marriage will no doubt give you valuable insight that you can use to support the married couples around you.
 - c. This series contains great info that can be applied beyond the marriage relationship.
- For a great article on leaning into your singleness, visit <https://www.emotionallyhealthy.org/lead-out-of-your-singleness/>

Scripture Study (30 Min)

- "We have to stop asking of marriage what God never designed it to give — perfect happiness, conflict-free living, and idolatrous obsession."

- Instead, we can appreciate what God designed marriage to provide: partnership, spiritual intimacy and the ability to pursue God — together. What are some common misconceptions about marriage? Gary Thomas explains this as follows:
 - "Finding a 'soul mate' — someone who will complete us,". "The problem with looking to another human to complete us is that, spiritually speaking, it's idolatry. We are to find our fulfillment and purpose in God . . . and if we expect our spouse to be 'God' to us, he or she will fail every day. No person can live up to such expectations. When my wife forgives me . . . and accepts me, I learn to receive God's forgiveness and acceptance as well. In that moment, she is modeling God to me, revealing God's mercy to me, and helping me to see with my own eyes a very real spiritual reality."
 - Everyone has bad days, yells at his or her spouse, or is downright selfish. Despite these imperfections, God created the husband and wife to steer each other in His direction. *(Gary Thomas, Sacred Marriage)*
- God's desire is for married couples to continually grow in their sacramental relationship with God, with one another, and the community of God's people. In what ways can godly community act as support during difficult seasons in marriage?
- While we hold marriage in high regard we do not place it in the category of a sacrament. And yet, we believe there is something sacred about this "divine institution." God's intimacy can be seen by remembering:
 - God created marriage as a loyal partnership between one man and one woman.
 - Marriage is the firmest foundation for building a family.
 - God designed sexual expression to help married couples build intimacy.
 - Marriage mirrors God's covenant relationship with His people.
- In God's covenant relationship with His people, He is forgiving and committed. How does God's character to forgive and never leave you impact your approach to your marriage or future marriage?
- Discuss how each the following bible verses should impact your marriage:
 - Isaiah 54:5: "For your Maker is your husband, the LORD of hosts is his name; and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer, the God of the whole earth he is called."
 - Genesis 2:24: "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."
 - Ephesians 4:2: "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love."
 - 1 Peter 4:8: "Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins."

- According to a Gallup Poll, the divorce rate among Christians who pray out loud together is 1 out of 1,153. Why do you suppose that is?
- When are some opportunities to pray out loud with your spouse?

Group Prayer (15 Min)

Trios (20 Min)

Same gender groups of three. If numbers are uneven, go to groups of two.

- **Spiritual Velocity:**
 - How did you see God at work in your life this week?
 - What has God been teaching you in His Word as you've encountered it in this week's Life Journal readings, Sunday message, or LIFEGroup study?
 - What's an area of your life in which you know you need to repent or grow? Is there an area of your life in which you'd like a friend to check in on you periodically?
- **Joining Jesus on His Mission:**
 - What kind of conversations are you having with non-Christians? How's your 3-2-1 challenge going? Share about connections you're building and spiritual conversations you're having with non-believing neighbors and friends.
 - List the names of non-Christians in your life that you can pray for:

 - What good can we do around here? (Missional party? Service project?)
 - How can we help each other, our neighbors, and our city in prayer?